

competitive edge in the global economy. This is essential so that the youth of America can once again be competitive with their international peers and attain satisfying, well-paying jobs. It is essential so that American "Job Creators" will be able to find future employees with the right skill sets to meet their needs right here at home.

My legislation will establish an Office of STEM Education at the Department of Education, through which we will be making a national and international statement that the STEM fields are a national priority. This office can speak with articulation on why we must compete at the highest level on international benchmark tests such as the PISA, NAEP and TIMMS tests.

By providing federal support for State Consortia on STEM Education, my bill helps States exercise their power to create, maintain, and grow their STEM platform. The bill acknowledges existing public-private collaborations and will grow such efforts in the STEM community. These state consortia are already springing up at the grassroots level. Through a federal matching grant, we will be reaffirming our Nation's priorities while allowing States to dictate and control their educational agenda by identifying best practices and implementing state standards.

Finally, my legislation will boost American ingenuity and innovation by promoting the development of transformational technology for the classroom through the Education Innovation Project. Through a small federal dollar investment, small startup companies and the private market will deliver a huge return on educational technological innovation.

Mr. Speaker, it is the aspiration of ALL Americans—rich and poor, rural and urban, public school and private school, Republican and Democrat—to realize the American dream for their children. The STEM Education Innovation Act builds up the platform of local educational communities all throughout the United States to collaborate and consolidate a solid educational platform holding up the pillars of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). By supporting STEM efforts in American public schools, we are investing in the future of American youth. We are also investing in American ingenuity, innovation, and infrastructure: ensuring an educated population to carry us forward into the future.

**CELEBRATING THE DEDICATION
OF THE WEST HILLS COLLEGE
LEMOORE GOLDEN EAGLE
ARENA**

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize West Hills College Lemoore on the occasion of the Dedication Ceremony of the Golden Eagle Arena, its new, state-of-the-art facility which will provide a venue for the expanding educational and athletic programs. The new 52,000 square-foot arena will provide a home to the Golden Eagles basketball and volleyball teams, while also facilitating class space for enhanced physical education.

Golden Eagle Arena represents the third phase of growth for West Hills College

Lemoore. The college has grown substantially since opening its doors in 2002. With the construction of the new arena approved by the Lemoore City Council in 2006, tireless work has been put in to developing a center that can host a variety of athletic and academic events. The state-of-the-art lighting, sound and technological equipment found within this facility provide an ideal venue for a variety of performances. The versatile flooring ensures that the hardwood basketball court will remain in pristine condition and promote longevity for this grand investment. This 2,700 seat stadium will enrich student life and enhance the Golden Eagle spirit. Even though nascent, the Golden Eagle Arena has already been home to various high profile, national, public servant guest speakers.

West Hills College Lemoore has done nothing short of a job well done. After more than eighteen months of construction, the Golden Eagle Arena is complete. The perseverance of the Lemoore campus faculty, administration, students and community support has prevailed with this crown jewel in these tough economic times. In particular, I would like to commend the dedication of President Don Warkentin, Chancellor Frank Gornick, and the Board of Trustees: Mark McKean, Bill Henry, Nina Oxborrow, Steve Cantu, Edna Ivans, Jeff Levinson and Jack Minnite. Without the unwavering commitment of these individuals, projects and facilities like the Golden Eagle Arena would not be possible.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a proud supporter of the West Hills Community College District since my days in the California State Legislature. It is beautiful to see how this rural, community college meets its goal to serve its students with a diverse set of programs and curricula, while providing entertainment and enrichment venues such as the Golden Eagle Arena. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending West Hills College Lemoore and the community of Lemoore who have worked tirelessly to make the Golden Eagle Arena possible.

HONORING ALICE CARDONA

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an American trailblazer, a proud Puerto Rican and New Yorker whose advocacy for women's rights and minorities distinguished her as a true leader. Alice Cardona hailed from New York's Spanish Harlem or, El Barrio, where she was the first of nine children. From an early age, Alice began contributing to her community by volunteering with the Legion de Maria and providing psychological support to African American and Latino people in need. From this early experience, Alice had instilled in her a strong sense of the social, economic, and educational injustices facing people of color and the importance of remedying them.

Shortly thereafter, Alice worked for United Bronx Parents, where she helped foster parental involvement in the local school system. In 1964, she became involved in the first Head Start program in New York.

By the 1970s, she was working at ASPIRA and counseling young people. Alice's time

there inspired her to return to college and complete her degree, empowering her to further assist New York's minority communities. Upon graduation, she continued with ASPIRA and found more ways to become engaged in her community. She played a valuable role with the National Conference of Puerto Rican women and also co-founded HACER/Hispanic Women's Center, an important resource for assisting Latinas to achieve their educational goals.

As a member of Governor Mario Cuomo's Administration, Alice was the assistant director for the New York State Division for Women, where she further advocated for bilingual education and worked to combat HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, and domestic violence.

IN the 1990s, I had the pleasure of working side-by-side with Alice during my tenure as Director of the Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs in the United States. Together, we led Atrevete, the most successful Hispanic voter drive in American history. I will always look back on her dedication, passion, and tireless work ethic as an inspiration.

Even in retirement, Alice dedicated herself to others by staying active with groups like the Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs, the National Women's Political Caucus, and the National Association for Bilingual Education. Indeed, throughout her lifetime, she helped found more than 12 organizations dedicated to strengthening and empowering minority communities.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, Alice Cardona passed away. She is fondly remembered by many of us as a friend and role model. For all Latinas, her life is a source of pride and for New Yorkers, an inspiration to continue striving for greater social justice and opportunity in our City, state, and country. I ask that all my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Alice Cardona, an activist, passionate defender of women's rights, champion of bilingual education, and advocate for working people everywhere.

**THE VISA IMPROVEMENTS TO
STIMULATE INTERNATIONAL
TOURISM TO THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA (VISIT
USA) ACT**

HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of myself and Congressman DAVID DREIER to discuss a bill that we introduced yesterday, the Visa Improvements to Stimulate International Tourism to the United States of America, VISIT USA, Act.

This is the companion bill to S. 1746, which was introduced on a bipartisan basis in the United States Senate by Senator SCHUMER of New York and Senator LEE of Utah.

The VISIT USA Act is a common-sense proposal that is about one thing—creating jobs and boosting our economy.

According to the U.S. International Trade Administration, the travel and tourism industry accounts for more than 25 percent of all U.S. services exports—our nation's largest service export, in fact. In 2010, international travel to the U.S. accounted for \$134 billion in receipts